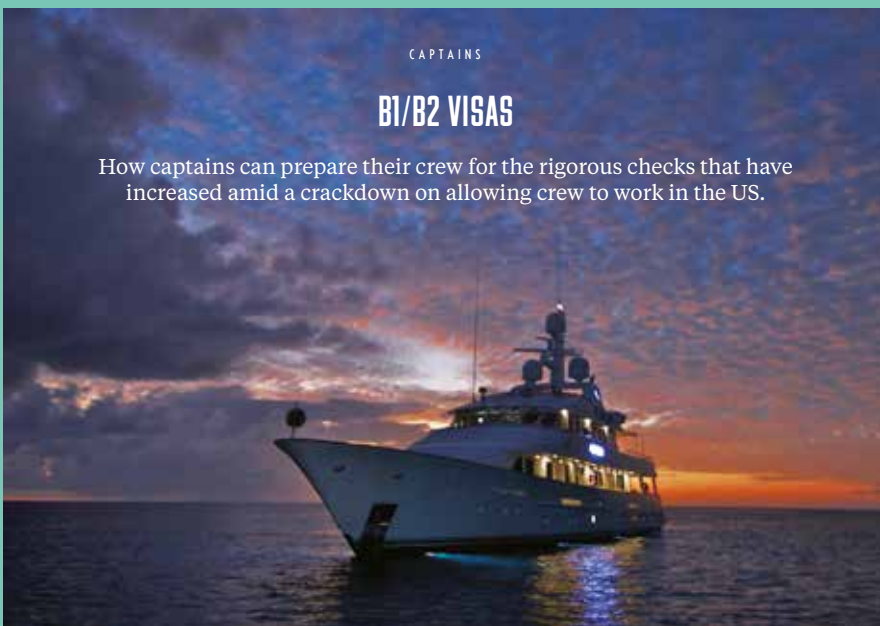


# The Crew Report

A REPORT WORTH READING



CAPTAINS

## B1/B2 VISAS

How captains can prepare their crew for the rigorous checks that have increased amid a crackdown on allowing crew to work in the US.

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GALLEY

## THE SHIP'S COOK CERTIFICATE

*How chefs are faring following the industry's slow uptake of the Ship's Cook Certificate.*

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*Uniform disasters on board: how to manage them and how to avoid them in the first place.*

ENGINE ROOM

The pros and cons of working as a sole engineer versus being part of an engine-room team.

DECK

## KILL OR BE KILLED

The results from our survey on the use of kill cords.

CAREERS

*Will virtual reality be the focus surrounding the training of tomorrow's superyacht crew, and what technology is already out there?*

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## WELCOME LETTER

As you're reading this, you might be wondering why I'm talking about the new year – this is our Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show issue and there's a good two months until we reach 2018. But each new year brings new starts, new ideas and fresh thinking – although for superyacht crew this perhaps comes at the end of January when those winter-season charters are coming to an end.

We've been privileged to have a fair few ex-crewmembers work at The Superyacht Group over the past few years – Amber Harley, Hattie Weight, James Pool, Henry Whale, Tork Buckley, Sean Brown – and even me! For most, working with us is their first land-based step after a career or job,

depending on the person, at sea. What I find most interesting is that when they look back on their time on board, while it's filled with incredible stories that will always remain amazing memories, there's a general agreement that there isn't enough information available to crew considering leaving a life at sea for a life on land.

There's certainly something in the phrase 'once crew, always crew', and by that I mean crew have had unbelievable experiences that only other crew who have been lucky enough to have had similar experiences can really understand. They don't just stop being crew the moment they step off the boat. It's part of who they – or should I say we – are.

It's something *The Crew Report* has done and will continue to do, but I think more players in the industry should support crew in the next land-based phases of their careers. Crew (well, most of them) love this industry, so let's ensure they keep loving it even when they're no longer working ridiculous hours and getting those hefty tips at the end of the charter. Whether that's through a careers event on the different options available in the land-based superyacht industry for those thinking about leaving it or more articles about different career paths, crew deserve to be looked after as they're considering this big move – just as they've spent their at-sea career looking after other people. So keep an eye out – we promise we'll look after you.

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# HERE'S TO A TRANSPARENT FUTURE

*Lulu Trask remembers one incident earlier this year and the progress our industry has made, headed by one management company, when it comes to transparency.*

I wish I could say 2017 was the year that the superyacht industry had zero crew fatalities – but I can't. It's something I feel strongly about and those who have followed *The Crew Report* over the years will have read about it in various forms. But there's only so much the industry's journalists can do from behind the screens of their laptops and iPhones. And, guaranteed, we'll keep doing it. We'll keep writing about the importance of safety harnesses, of top-down mentoring, of reporting incidents and of management companies sharing incident reports among the wider fleet rather than just between those yachts on their books. And we'll keep hoping it will make a difference.

And perhaps it has. For so long we've banged the drum of transparency; the need to talk openly about incidents on board to ensure they're not repeated. So at the start of the year, when news broke about the tragic fatality of a crewmember on board a sailing yacht, we were surprised to receive confirmation of the incident via an e-blast from Hill Robinson, the yacht's management company at the time. The announcement gave as much information as was available while remaining morally appropriate, which meant those less professional media channels (none of which, I might add, lie within the superyacht industry) couldn't speculate. In my opinion, the management company, while no doubt highly distressed, acted admirably. Not because

it provided information for gossip-hungry journalists (in a close-knit industry such as ours, these don't exist when it comes to such severe matters), but because it provided transparency – transparency that meant people couldn't speculate but that others could learn.

Perhaps all this banging of the drum has been useful after all. And while I wouldn't want to suggest The Superyacht Group, not only via *The Crew Report* but also through *The Superyacht Report* and *SuperyachtNews.com*, is the reason behind this yacht-management company's actions, I do believe wider industry discussion could have played a part in the decision to publicly acknowledge what had happened.

So as we approach the end of 2017, I implore more crew to enter the new year by voting for transparency. And that doesn't mean calling the media the moment an accident happens; it means communicating with your captain, with your management company and, when appropriate, with your chosen media channels to ensure any reports (which will find their way into the industry news channels somehow) are accurate and devoid of speculation.

What we witnessed with the above-mentioned incident was proof that the industry isn't desperate to point fingers. So let's head into the new year comforted by that. It's not a blame game, it's a lesson and one that only those involved have the privilege to teach. [LI](#)



BY LULU TRASK

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# IS TWO BETTER THAN ONE?

SHOULD YACHTS FEATURE TWO SETS OF CREW - ONE DEALING DIRECTLY WITH GUESTS AND ANOTHER COMPRISING A SMALLER MAINTENANCE TEAM? WE EXPLORE THE FEASIBILITY OF THIS CONCEPT AND WHETHER IT COULD IMPROVE THE WORKING LIFE OF CREW.

BY RACHEL ROWNEY

In a previous issue of *The Crew Report*, Martin Redmayne, chairman of The Superyacht Group, discussed an idea that could revolutionise the way superyachts staff their vessels. The concept is to have two crews: a 'service crew' that is guest-facing, much like a restaurant's *maitre d'*, and a 'maintenance crew' in charge of the cleaning and operation of the vessel when guests aren't on board. Redmayne argued that this set-up would mean that each crew would not be overworked and so become disenchanted with the yacht-crew life. There would be a more specialised service life for certain crew, rather than the broad role that covers many facets of life on board. However, what are the feasibilities of this? Can this concept work in practice?

There is a systemic problem of longevity in our industry. There are many reasons for this, but many ex-crew say the 'work-hard/play-hard' lifestyle can get the better of them. Seasonal work may offer some respite from the stresses of a busy charter period, but will it just encourage people to jump ship even more, as there is no guaranteed work for 12 months of the year?

It is fairly common to have a skeleton team to look after the vessel if there is a substantial period of downtime or the

yacht is going into a refit facility. "The number of crew that are more owner- or guest-facing (interior crew) is obviously increased for the time that the yacht is in service," explains Paul Rutterford, general manager at Viking Recruitment. "Then, over the downtime, you'll find you might be left with a skeleton crew, people such as the captain and engineer, who will remain with the yacht that might be in the yard having its refit."

"The scheme is simple," says Dario Savino, captain of motoryacht *Regina d'Italia*. "If the management has at least three or four yachts, the managers can employ some key figures (such as a captain, officers, chef, chief stew and chief engineer) and have them rotate on the different yachts, allowing a very busy yacht to perform at its best on a double charter season and giving the crew some quality time off." Under this set-up, the cost of the 'extra' crew would be divided among the fleet of yachts, making it more affordable than having rotational or two sets of crew.

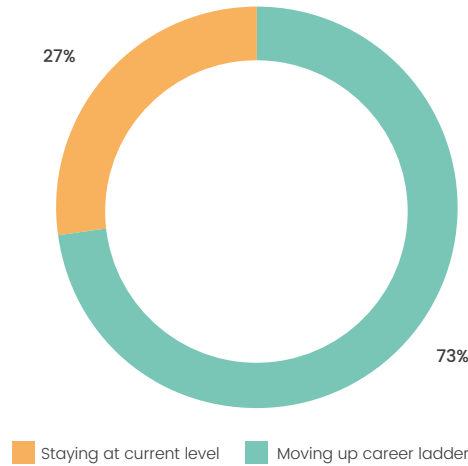
However, issues may arise when it comes to individual responsibility as crew often have to repair any damages on board. If they knew that another set of crew is available to rectify any mistakes, it could lead to a lax attitude when



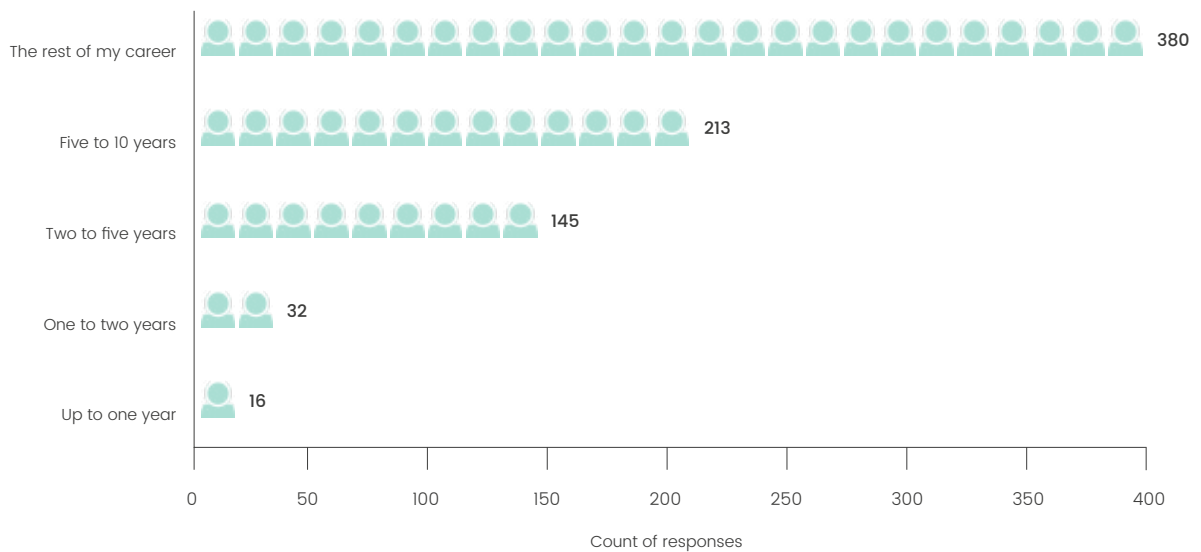


A SURVEY UNDERTAKEN BY THE SUPERYACHT INTELLIGENCE AGENCY SHOWS THE AMBITIONS OF CURRENT CREW, AND THE SUBSEQUENT IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING THEIR INTERESTING IN WORKING ON BOARD.

### Long-term career plans



### Intended length of time in the yachting industry





## There is a systemic problem of longevity in our industry.

it comes to maintaining the vessel during the high season. One ex-deckhand explains, "As deck crew, because we knew we had to maintain the deck if there was a chip or a scratch, you would have to take responsibility for it and fix it. It would all take a long time but, as a result, you would be more careful when you are carrying out the operations. Whereas if you have a deckie who knows they don't have to deal with it and the other guys have to pick up the slack, they can do whatever they want and duck the responsibilities."

When it comes to the interior crew, one stewardess I speak to highlights how the cleaning

team would have a thorough knowledge of how to manage and maintain the yacht, something unfamiliar to the average interior crewmember. "The benefit of having a cleaning team would be that they would know the products very well and could do a great, very detailed job, rather than a stew throwing some water and vinegar over your stingray-skin jewellery box." Having said that, this stew also says she would have liked to have had the two-crew option when she was on board, seeing it as a way to recoup and recover between busy periods. "I think the two sets of crew could work," she says. "Ultimately, it would come down to good organisation."

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Rutterford feels that the service/maintenance crew concept could be most easily applied to the interior crew (those who are most prominently guest-facing), but for engineering crew he believes it may not be as realistic because these positions require specialist training and sea time to achieve qualifications.

Intrinsically, as there is limited space on board superyachts and in order to comply with the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC) regulations, it is an accepted practice that crewmembers have dual or multi roles in their day-to-day life. Similarly, issues with having a service crew would arise if they lacked the skills needed for maintenance roles. Helen Warren, director of Sovren House Group, highlights how in a hypothetical situation where a guest breaks a jet ski, it would be difficult to have only service crew on board.

"Do we wait until the winter time to fix the jet ski when the maintenance team is on there? No, it needs to be fixed immediately."

The idea of a service crew and a maintenance crew is an extension of crew rotation. Rotation is common for captains and engineers, but could this be extended to the entire crew set-up? Warren points to the individual nature of each yacht and the impact that changing crew can have on the atmosphere on board, which can alter the experience for the owner or charter client. "The service can be identical but the whole ambience of the boat could be different. It's like good cops and bad cops; you can have rotational vessels where you have one captain who is only a delivery captain and the other captain who is only on there for the owner. Then the relationship between the captains and the crew can change due to

different characters. It is such an individual market." And she adds, "Owners like continuity; they like to see the same people dealing with them, and they like the reassurance that the captain is somebody who knows their boat well and they can rely on and trust them with their €100 million investment."

Aside from welfare, if crew were to work in two teams, the financial savings of seasonal contracts could be considerable for the owner. "Put yourself in the position of the owner. If they are not going to use the yacht in the winter months and primarily use it in the summer season, you're not going to pay to have all the crew on there but you might pay to have minimal crew to ensure maintenance is done," says Rutterford. However, if crew are not on a 12-month contract, they will not necessarily feel any sense of loyalty or commitment to a certain vessel. There could



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potentially be an increase in hopping from yacht to yacht.

The difficulty of seasonal work in the yachting industry is that there doesn't have to be an 'off-season'. A typical charter crew's summer season will be in the Mediterranean; they will then embark on an Atlantic crossing and start the winter season in the Caribbean. This is where yachting differs from other seasonal work, such as working in a ski chalet. "The idea of having a skeleton winter team is very feasible on a superyacht if it isn't doing dual seasons or world travel," says Warren. To some extent, the concept of two teams already exists in practice, with many larger yachts having a full crew in the busy season and a skeleton crew in the off-season.


The two-team concept can be seen as a plus for many crew, who might use the months off to travel or return home after

a busy season. But this could also backfire as many crew enjoy the busy work schedules and travel opportunities, seeing this as one of the attractions of being in the business.

As with everything in this industry, it is hard to generalise from yacht to yacht, owner to owner and crew to crew. For some crewmembers, the concept of working for one summer season, and taking the rest of the year off to recoup while the yacht is looked after by another set of crew, would fit perfectly into their lifestyle. For owners, although this scenario may ensure a good level of service, they risk losing loyal crew and their intricate knowledge of a vessel. And it is important not to forget that many crew enjoy the varied aspects of their roles on board – a mix of behind-the-scenes work with guest interaction. **RR**

*One issue that arises is whether a service-only crew would take less care and leave the boat in a worse condition for the maintenance crew.*

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# Amy Morley-Beavers

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1 January, 1969 – 5 November, 2016

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**“It is so hard to believe that Amy is no longer here with us. I have known Amy for a few years now and always loved running into her. She always had a smile on her face and such a friendly attitude. Those are the memories that will always stay with me, and I will miss her dearly.”**

BY LULU TRASK

It is approaching a year since the tragic passing of Amy Morley-Beavers. Amy needs no introduction – to be in the superyacht industry comes hand in hand with having known this tremendous woman, described by her mother, Beverly Morley, as having “an infinite capacity to love others”. So when Amy passed away on 5 November, 2016, our industry was without its heart and Amy’s beloved family and friends had to come to terms with losing someone it, quite simply, wasn’t fair to lose.

Amy’s list of accomplishments reads on and on, and while in

many ways no one was ever surprised – after all, Amy was incredibly intelligent (“scary smart!”, as her mother describes her) – people would also, sometimes, be surprised. Amy was exemplarily humble in each of her numerous achievements, which included her position as vice chair of MERPAC (a special advisory committee to the Department of Homeland Security), vice president of the Maritime Education Standards Council, a member of the board of education at Bethany Christian School, academic principal of MPT and, her biggest achievement, her beloved son Matthew.

Those many and lucky people who knew Amy were aware of her medical difficulties, yet those who had only just met her wouldn’t know a thing because Amy was so concerned with the wellbeing and happiness of others. “One of Amy’s greatest accomplishments was the ability to encourage others to be better than they thought they could be,” remembers her mother. “She had infinite capacity to love others. She could reach out to those who were struggling and instill a will to try harder and not to give up.”

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**Amy was truly remarkable in her efforts to improve the education of all mariners who came through the doors of MPT.**

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# RESPONSIBLE

WHY HAVE 'COWBOY' RECRUITERS BECOME SO WIDESPREAD IN THE SUPERYACHT MARKET AND WHERE DOES THE ONUS LIE IN COMBATTING THE ISSUE? WE ASK WHETHER IT IS DOWN TO THE MARKET TO SELF-REGULATE, IF WE WOULD BENEFIT FROM AN ASSOCIATION OR IF THE RESPONSIBILITY LIES ELSEWHERE.

BY RORY JACKSON

The issue of unscrupulous recruitment practices is, unfortunately, a recurring one in superyachting. Whether it is pyjama-clad chancers hoping to make a quick buck from their basement PCs, unregistered and unprofessional companies harvesting data or those who take CVs from the dockside and fence them in pubs, the dark arts of recruitment are many and varied. And, more worryingly, they are incredibly common. So what are the risks of poor recruitment practice and how can the market protect itself from the cowboys?

For those old-school professionals who enjoyed a world of purchasing vessels with suitcases full of cash and employing contract-less individuals off the dock, no doubt the regulations that govern recruitment in this age of professional yachting can be seen as unnecessary red tape and an additional expense. To those who defend this view and those businesses that perpetuate its continuation, the message needs to be clear: illegal and poor practice endangers the crew, the asset and the owner.

"First things first, it is important to separate legal recruiting businesses from illegal recruitment 'agencies,'" starts Zoe Benson, director at Global Crew Services, a reputable

one-woman recruitment agency based in Palma de Mallorca. "There are very clear guidelines that dictate how recruitment agencies worldwide, and in our industry, should operate. We are subject to data-protection legislation, ISO standards, MLC and much more."

Data protection, or the lack thereof, forms the bedrock for one of the most damning arguments against malpractice in the recruitment field. The argument is an incredibly simple one. A number of the 'recruitment agents' that are in business to make a quick deal have little or no means of protecting crew or vessel data. In the wrong hands, this information could be harmful in a variety of ways.

Mark Charman, CEO of Faststream Recruitment, one of the world's largest maritime recruitment businesses, explains, "When candidates share their information with disreputable businesses or individuals, they have no idea where [it] is going, who it is going to end up with or how it is going to be used. Crew candidates are, at times, too trusting of businesses that claim to be, or look, professional."

Issues that arise from data-related malpractice vary from minor annoyances to serious



# RECRUITMENT

security risks. Charman outlines a scenario that Faststream recently encountered, whereby a vessel received the CV of a crewmember already working on board, the CV having been obtained from an unfamiliar recruitment agent using data they had harvested from social media or received from another cowboy recruiter. While this is by no means a safety concern, it does highlight some of the illegal practices employed by these businesses. In a worst-case scenario, personal, professional and financial information could be used to cause serious harm.

"I recently saw on social media someone complaining that the majority of crew-recruitment websites were not secure and my knee-jerk reaction was to assume that this claim was ridiculous," continues Benson. "When I did my own research,

I found that they were, in fact, correct." She adds that it is actually very easy to tell whether or not a website is secure. "In the URL bar, on the left-hand side, it will either show a padlock and/or have the word 'secure' visible. If a recruitment website does not have this, it should immediately be a red flag."

The security provision Benson outlines is known as a Secure Sockets Layer (SSL). It is the standard security technology for encrypting websites and thereby protecting any information therein. Legally practising recruitment agencies should all, at the very least, have secure websites if they contain sensitive data.

The issues surrounding data protection and illegal practice have even led some to question whether or not

superyacht recruitment should have an industry-wide association. "In all honesty, I don't think that an association would benefit the superyacht industry," says Charman. "There are various bodies that determine how recruitment agencies should be run, as well as legislation and EU directives. In the United Kingdom, The Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC) sets the ethical recruitment standards to be adhered to. It is an optional membership that includes auditing processes and constant checks and balances. A superyachting association would be incredibly difficult to enforce."

Charman's view is echoed by Benson, who sees little to be gained in attempting to create an association. The issue remains that those fly-by-night businesses that



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**There are very clear guidelines that dictate how recruitment agencies worldwide, and in our industry, should operate.**

”

wish to stay below the radar with regards to malpractice would simply choose not to join the association and remain beyond reproach. Furthermore, there would be no genuinely enforceable authority.

However, this is not the first time that the possibility of a recruitment association has been a topic of interest. Indeed, in 2008, the Professional Yachting Association (PYA) formed and chaired the International Association of Yacht Crew Employment Agencies (IAYCEA). The aim of the association was to entrench a Code of Professional Practices and Ethics for the recruitment community. However, this proved difficult in practice.





"Unfortunately, many of the attending individuals, albeit there for the greater good, were not in a position to vote on behalf of their respective companies, and it became clear, even in this small group, how guarded the companies were about what practices they operate under – or don't," comments Joey Meen, CEO of G.U.E.S.T Steering Committee, the body enforcing interior training standards for the superyacht industry. "Sadly, this group didn't go further than half a dozen meetings.

The perceived failings of the IAYCEA showcase just some of the issues that would manifest themselves if, once again, the industry attempted to associate its way out of an issue and this has led others to suggest alternative solutions. "The onus needs to fall on local authorities to police the issue," continues Benson. "It is the same in France and Italy as it is in Spain. When you set up a company, you are issued a licence by the government once you meet the necessary criteria for operation. Since opening as a business, I have never had a spot check carried out by the local

authorities. It should be the local authorities' responsibility to ensure that businesses are operating legally and diligently. Unfortunately, like with any local governmental responsibility, there is the challenge of resources."

Both Benson and Charman also espouse a self-regulating market within which the cowboys are discovered through customers choosing to avoid particular businesses. The belief is that the good and bad experiences that captains and owners have will dictate which agencies remain in business. However, the onus here is on captains and crew to be diligent and not necessarily accept the quick and easy solution.

Captain Richard Le Quesne, a PYA council member, says, "Although we are very much aware of the problems being caused by cowboy operations in the crew placement business, and have heard a number of complaints from crew whose CVs have been sent to employers without their knowledge, we are still, unfortunately, talking about an 'I need it now, if not sooner'

situation for crew." And he adds, "I think the most effective solution will be showing the advantages of using a legitimate, properly run agency rather than a one-man, Internet-only, fly-by-night business. And yet, we have to recognise that junior crew, who represent the majority of crew agents' business, will not, and probably are not, capable of restricting their search for a job to just the bona fide agents."

Illegal recruiting and malpractice are rife to the extent that they are almost considered by many to be the norm. Without a genuine need for an association, it is the responsibility of the market itself to educate crew, captains and owners alike on the risks of engaging with businesses that conduct themselves in an unscrupulous manner, knowingly or unknowingly. In an ideal world, the responsibility to police the issue would fall to local authorities to ensure businesses are operating legally. However, rather than waiting for that ideal world to materialise, the superyacht market needs to up the education stakes. RJ

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CAPTAINS

# Restrictive borders



REPORTS OF A CRACKDOWN ON CREW APPLYING FOR US VISAS HAVE BEEN CIRCULATING AMONG THE YACHTING MEDIA AND CAPTAINS HAVE BEEN ASKING US FOR ADVICE ON WHAT TO TELL THEIR CREW. BUT WHAT ACTUALLY IS THE PROBLEM AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, WHAT SHOULD CAPTAINS BE SAYING TO THEIR CREW TO ENSURE THEY DON'T HAVE ANY PROBLEMS?

BY BRYONY MCCABE

In the current political climate, the United States is the centre of the world's attention as the impact of a Trump administration becomes clear. It seems the US borders are stricter than ever and this, of course, is a growing concern for the superyacht industry that is made up of foreign crew. But even prior to Trump's presidency, there were reports circulating in the industry about an increase of foreign crew experiencing difficulties in obtaining the appropriate visa required to work on a yacht visiting the US. Some believe the issue to be part of a nationwide crackdown on visas and foreign entry into the country.

B-1/B-2 visas are classed as visitor visas and are described by the US authorities as being "for persons who want to enter the United States temporarily for business (visa category B-1), tourism, pleasure or visiting (visa category B-2), or a combination of both purposes (B-1/B-2)". Periods of stay for B-1 visas may be granted initially for a duration long enough to allow the visitor to conduct business up to a maximum of six months and can be extended for another six months. Because of the permitted length of stay, and because no fixed schedule is needed, these categories are the most suitable visa options for foreign crew working on yachts.



THE CREW REPORT  
ISSUE 83

CAPTAINS SECTION  
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“ We are currently advising crew not to use the word ‘charter’ at any point during their interview – and say ‘voyages’ and ‘relocation’ rather than ‘cruise’ or ‘guest trip’. ”

“There are lots of discussions about the difficulties for [crew] to obtain their B-1/B-2 visas,” admits Esther Delamare, senior crew manager at Hill Robinson Crew. “Last season, we had several yachts leaving for the US and Caribbean and the crew all managed to get their visas in different places. However, some crew were given B-1/B-2 visas with the name of the yacht written on, meaning it is only valid for that particular yacht.” As a general trend, Delamare believes that all US embassies are making the rules stricter, while there are still a few candidates here and there managing to get a B-1/B-2 visa.

The US embassy in the United Kingdom gives visa application information and recommendations on its website that specifies: “If you will be working on a private yacht

sailing out of a foreign port and cruising in US waters for more than 29 days, you require a B-1 visa”. However, many of the reports of crewmembers having problems obtaining such visas suggest the issues mainly affect those working on charter yachts.

“There are a lot of crew requesting the B-1/B-2 visa every year and the current issue is down to a strengthening of the way the rules are interpreted,” explains Mark Ravnholt, operation manager at Catalano Shipping Services, adding that the choice of language is important during an application interview. “We are currently advising crew not to use the word ‘charter’ at any point during their interview – and say ‘voyages’ and ‘relocation’ rather than ‘cruise’ or ‘guest trip’.”

The fact is that without proper knowledge of the superyacht industry, US embassies may interpret a charter yacht as falling into the commercial transport category. However, Ravnholt argues that whether a yacht is registered as private or commercial, it does not have a fixed schedule and therefore should be considered as a private mode of transport.

This also means it is inadvisable for crew to be presenting boat papers or registry documentation that gives the boat a commercial status. “Anything that the officers at the embassies will be able to link to commercial activity can lead to an officer asking crew to apply for C-1/D visa rather than B-1/B-2, which is not very convenient in the yachting world,” adds Ravnholt.

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Crewmember (D) visas are described as “for persons working on board sea vessels or international airlines in the United States, providing services required for normal operation and intending to depart the United States on the same vessel or any other vessel within 29 days”. If crew travel to the United States to join the vessel, in addition to a crewmember (D) visa, they

will also need a transit (C-1) visa, or a combination C-1/D visa. Due to the very nature of yachting, this 29-day limit is not the most suitable option for yacht crew.

Evolution Yacht Agents, which is only able to advise on the topic regarding the tendencies and experiences at the US Embassy in Madrid, has also noticed this trend. “It seems

there are two issues currently at play,” advises Kerry Allerton, concierge and customer operations at Evolution. “The US visa department in Madrid is concerned about commercial activity in US waters and a crewmember’s intentions for visiting. Applicants should provide supporting documentation and evidence that their vessel is not chartering in US waters.”

“ While there is much scaremongering circulating on yacht-crew forums, social-media platforms and the yachting media, there are also those who believe the problem is minimal. ”









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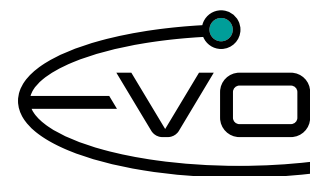
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# Captains’ comments

THE ISSUE

As owners seek to maximise time on the water and reduce downtime, how are captains adapting their refit plans?

”



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## Anonymous captain

With more competition for the best yard slots and busier itineraries, there is definitely more time pressure on yard periods than there used to be, which means both owners and captains are having to be smarter about organising refits.

A lot of effort has to be put in at the initial stages, such as writing detailed and specific

worklists, putting the project out to tender to the various yards and getting back comprehensive quotes. Without proper planning, projects can very quickly spiral out of control and early organisation helps to make sure that the refit finishes on time and on budget. There are always going to be surprises while the boat is in the yard, and you may end up

adding jobs, but at least you have got a baseline for the majority of the works.

The success of a refit period can also greatly depend on the communication between the owner, captain, yard and management, which has to be fluid.

## Captain Jason Chambers, *M/Y Ramble on Rose*

Firstly, we need to start with the crew structure. With more crew requesting rotation, I see it as an advantage to have the most competent crew during the refit periods and then rotate them more during the season. From a refit point of view, this eliminates the occasional workers and allows better progress of certain works that are planned and understood during the development of the yard works. The officers and master have to have a break sooner or later, so who stays on top of the works? I personally use a rotational system on board that allows each crewmember to step up during the year, increasing his or her knowledge and responsibilities. The

advantage of this is that during the yard works we are all across the worklist. My chief officer becomes the man in charge during my time off and this allows him to grow. However, I use the third tier, either management or project manager, at a lesser cost to be across the interchange.

In terms of planning, I look five years in advance, breaking up the survey works, underwater works and larger exterior works into sections over a longer period. Painting in the water is a big advantage; that's where STP has been a good advantage for me on a 74m and recently on a 60m. I have steered away from painting and more towards a ceramic

coating paint protection product. This has given the paint a longer lifespan, which is cheaper overall for the owner and allows me to space out the paintwork further. I can then manage the larger works and not base it around a large paint period, which we all know takes longer, and these days I find the painting to be of a lower standard.

With the above plan of paintwork in the water, and with the protection of the ceramic coating, I can then schedule the survey works outside of these time periods. It elevates the ability to manage the works with our on-board crew and management.

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BY MARK CHARMAN

# DO YOU REALLY KNOW WHO YOU'RE HIRING?

MANY CONSIDER THAT A QUICK BROWSE OF A FACEBOOK PROFILE CONSTITUTES A SUFFICIENT BACKGROUND CHECK, BUT PLENTY OF THINGS CAN SLIP UNDER THE RADAR. MARK CHARMAN, CEO OF FASTSTREAM RECRUITMENT, EXPLAINS WHY - AND HOW - CAPTAINS WOULD BENEFIT FROM ADDITIONAL CANDIDATE RESEARCH.

In an industry where it is so important to know exactly who you are hiring, the techniques and tools used to take on yacht crew have not changed significantly in many years. No matter how rigorous the interview process and how glowing the references, recruiting crew can be a game of chance.

The superyacht industry is perhaps the most intimate place in which to work throughout the entire maritime sector, and is unlike most other jobs, no matter what your field of expertise; the cost of the boat you're working on, the responsibility and safety of the crew, owners and guests, for their food, children, belongings, well-being and everything else in between. It's as unique a career as you'll get.

While the industry is good at 'getting to know someone' before hiring them, many of

the crew who are hired are rarely subject to stringent and relevant checks that get beneath the skin of a social-media profile or reference from a previous employer. While recruiters, managers, captains and owners might look at prospective employees' Facebook, Twitter or Instagram profiles, this isn't sufficient. If there is something that you don't want the outside world to know about, you're not going to make it public on social media.

While references are hugely important, you are essentially relying on someone else's opinion. A recent survey of superyacht crew by Faststream revealed that nearly 40 per cent of crew secured their last job through being referred by a friend, which does pose an important question around the favourable nature of

references. As in other high-tech industries, the way references are taken is very different, and in many examples the references are taken not from the candidate's previous manager but from the staff working alongside them on a daily basis. Using this approach within the yachting industry could prove to be successful.

Another thing to think about is Personal Profile Analysis (PPA) psychometric testing. This has been used by thousands of employers, has been around since 1920 and was created by the same person who invented the lie-detector test. It provides an accurate insight into how people behave at work, answering questions such as: what are their strengths and limitations? How do they communicate? Are they self-starters? What motivates them? I have used them





## Would you want someone with a history of bad credit or bankruptcy to be in charge of the money on board? Would you be able to find this out from someone's Facebook profile or past references?

for many years as part of the hiring process for the Faststream business.

There is still a perception that psychometric tests are a pass or fail challenge, but the reality is that if you are being interviewed for a job that demands certain skills and abilities, it is in your interests not to be selected if you do not have the desired aptitudes. There is no such thing as a good or bad result because it is just a matter of fitting the right person to the right job and is something that I believe should be used. The tests could also be tailored specifically to this industry by focusing on behavioural questions, such as looking at teamwork and how someone might interact on board with other crewmembers.

If you are hiring crew of any level, you are likely to want to know if someone

has a criminal record or a dubious past. However, very few owners we work with utilise criminal-record checks, giving the impression that the industry could be taking unnecessary risks in the hiring processes when it comes to someone's background. Is this not just as important as ensuring a crewmember's CoC is present and up to date? Criminal-record checks as part of a thorough recruitment process are standard in many sectors, so why not in superyachts?

Financial background checks are another grey area, but highly relevant for crew handling money, such as pursers. Would you want someone with a history of bad credit or bankruptcy to be in charge of the money on board? Would you be able to find this out from someone's Facebook profile or past

references? The answer to both these questions would be no. However, we rarely see financial checks in place or as part of the recruitment process.

More stringent checks can obviously lead to further complexities in the hiring process, but the yacht sector must be prepared to evolve its 'industry standard' recruitment. The cruise industry is yachting's closest comparative sector in leisure maritime and has raised the bar in recent years when it comes to hiring, the checks it performs on its employees and the entire candidate experience. If the yachting industry was to learn from anywhere, cruise would be the place to go.

So, do you still think you know who you are hiring? [MC](#)

### ABOUT MARK CHARMAN

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# KILL or be KILLED



THE SUPERYACHT INTELLIGENCE AGENCY'S RESEARCH REVEALS STATISTICS ON THE USE OF KILL CORDS AND WHETHER OR NOT THEY ARE ON BOARD - AND USED ON - EVERY SUPERYACHT'S MAIN TENDER.

BY FELIX SOWERBUTTS

When you realise that a five-second inconvenience might one day save your life and the lives of everyone else on board, it becomes an inconvenience no more. This is very much the scenario presented by the kill cord every time owners, guests and crew set foot on board a tender. In essence, the use of a kill cord is akin to wearing a seatbelt in a car, but it is not so easy to police. The use of a kill cord is very much a self-regulated process, with awareness and good habits undoubtedly reinforced by good training.

The Superyacht Intelligence Agency recently undertook a survey of crew to find out more about kill cords and their overall use. More than half the respondents were captains (50.6 per cent); chief engineers (14.9 per cent), first officers (five per cent) and chief stewardesses (4.6 per cent) were among other on-board positions to respond to the survey. One of the questions asked whether kill cords were offered on board the main tender of the yacht on which they worked. As 87 per cent said there was a kill cord, this meant that for 13 per cent, there was no kill cord available.

While it is, of course, good that a very high percentage of tenders are fitted with them, it's staggering to think that in this day and age, when people are aware of the accidents that have taken place, and





crew know of the importance of using kill cords during their training, not all tender builders are prescribing kill cords as a compulsory piece of kit. If a law cannot be put in place to regulate their use, there should at least be a build regulation requiring a mandatory kill cord for every vessel built. Another question in the survey was, 'Do you use kill cords every time you operate a tender?', to which 22 per cent answered 'no'. However, it would appear that not all helmsmen have the option of using a kill cord.

Nonetheless, it's disturbing to know that almost a quarter of helmsmen will get into a tender and not wrap a kill cord around either their wrist or waist or, as the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) recommends, their leg. While the survey comprised a majority response rate from captains, it was indeed mostly captains who answered that they didn't use kill



*One of the issues is owners and guests who want to drive the tender not knowing what a kill cord is.*

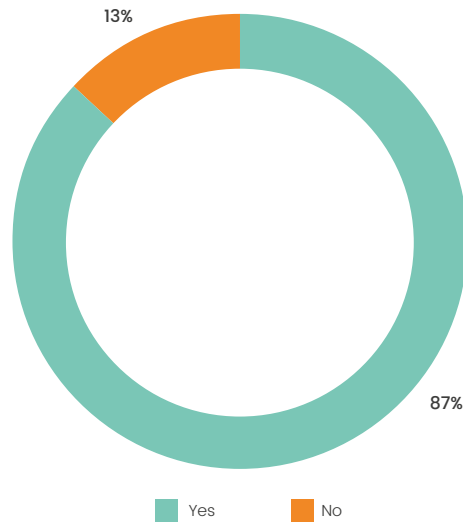
“ It’s like driving a car in that once you’ve passed your test, you may pick up bad habits – and not putting on a kill cord is a bad habit.

”

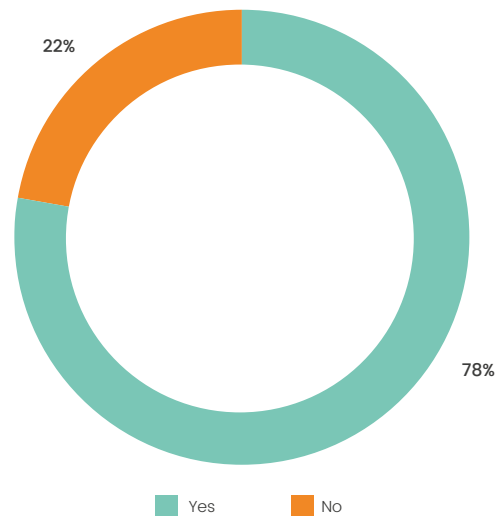
cords. Looking deeper into the analysis of those who answered 'no' (40 per cent of whom were captains), 60 per cent of the respondents were on 63–73m motoryachts. Fifty per cent were on yachts that operated privately, 30 per cent operated privately and commercially, 10 per cent operated commercially and 10 per cent did not specify. Yachts engaged in trade are typically run to a higher standard, so one might expect the slip in standards regarding the use of kill cords to be attributed to privately operated yachts.

"It tends to be the short transfers that are the problem," suggests Josh Richardson, managing director of Superyacht Tenders & Toys and also a former crewmember and crew trainer. "You might be doing a transfer of a couple of hundred metres and [using a kill cord is] overlooked in that scenario. You might be time-pressured and trying to do multiple things at once. And sometimes you can't stand at the wheel with a kill cord on. But, really, it's the captain's responsibility to make sure everyone does it – it's on their shoulders if crew aren't wearing them because they are the guys who train the crew." However, Richardson also says that it's not predominately the crew who are at fault; often, owners and guests want to drive the tenders but have never had any training. "They don't even know or consider what a kill cord is," he adds.

### Does your main tender offer the use of kill cords?



### Do you use kill cords every time you operate the tender?







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# THE CHOICE IS YOURS

BY DARRYL COOPER

**TRADITIONAL SHORT-COURSE TRAINING, WHICH IS STILL VERY EFFECTIVE, IS DEFINITELY THE NORM, BUT SOME ARE PLOTTING A DIFFERENT COURSE FOR SUPERYACHT CREW USING A BLENDED-LEARNING APPROACH. DARRYL COOPER, TRAINING AND FACILITIES COORDINATOR AT MARITIME SKILLS ACADEMY, EXPLAINS.**

Traditional safety training conducted ashore has many merits. It is a group endeavour, drawing on the experiences and expertise of all course delegates. Training simulations can be made far more realistic than drills carried out on board and expert trainers can share their skills and knowledge. After all, learning is a social event, and the opportunity to discuss ideas and different methods and concepts helps enormously in grasping the information that needs to be assumed.

For higher qualifications, such as OOW Yachts, traditional learning establishments hold many of the same advantages as training centres running short courses: off-the-job theory delivered by industry professionals in a social-learning environment over a number of weeks or months. The downside of this for yacht crew is the time spent away from work

in what is a fast-paced and ever-changing sector of the maritime industry. Time off the job also means time not earning, while often having to fund not only tuition fees but also accommodation, board and travel.

At the other end of the scale is distance learning: a course that is often studied in isolation and requires a very determined person to work meticulously through to the end with very little physical help. Assessments and acknowledgment of progression rely on correspondence, previously by post but nowadays via email. For some, this route can be beneficial, assuming that the learning is well structured and can be followed intuitively.

An effective alternative is blended learning. A well-structured blended learning course can allow students to maximise their time while still working and earning. It then gives them the best chance to

gain their qualification with the face-to-face attended section of the course. Blended learning is not a new concept, but with the development of electronic communications on board, the opportunity to take advantage of the best of both worlds has never been so good.

Hand in hand with the advancement of on-board communications comes the new wave of computer-based training. Those with previous experience of computer-based training (CBT) courses may not have the most encouraging memories of it. Currently, though, there seems to have been a resurgence in companies producing CBT courses, many now of high quality. A lot of big names in training are working on CBT course portfolios and they are starting to be approved by even the most conservative flag states.

Utilising the advancements in CBT, communi-



cations and connectivity, there have been exciting developments concerning the STCW refresher training now required after the 2010 Manila Amendments. Traditional short-course training, which is still very effective, is definitely the norm, but some are plotting a different course using a blended-learning approach. First-theory training takes place on board a vessel via an IT interface, then a vessel’s own drills and exercises are recorded and used to accredit students with being able to conduct basic elements of practical training. Lastly, delegates attend a practical land-based course to complete exercises that cannot be carried out on board – live fire drills or life-raft drills, for example.


Theory elements are conducted at the pace of the learner, with the opportunity to re-do elements that one is unsure of, and they are spread over a longer time period than just a few days. Actively engaging crew in training with small, but regular, elements is a great way to avoid skill fade. The North Sea offshore sector has utilised on-board development training (OBDT) over a number of decades for exactly this reason. Even with the new updated training requirements, five years between courses with minimal positive reinforcement on board can lead to some warped memories of best-practice procedures.

The largest players in the cruise and passenger-vessel markets are spearheading

combination training using new software and investing in purpose-built training facilities. However, there are options available for smaller operators which we at MSA think could greatly benefit many yacht operators. Most combination training packages offer more advantages than just a good platform for mandatory training.

In Issue 81 of *The Crew Report*, Rory Jackson wrote about tender operator training: “You would be hard-pressed to find a captain ... who believes that an additional course is a sufficient replacement for talent, experience and trust, not to mention on-board training.” This statement can be applied to many a skill base on board. In particular,

yachts can require a certain level of bespoke training. One combination training package in particular offers users the facility to create their own courses within the training framework. This can be as routine as a safety induction assessment or a VIP confidentiality policy right through to bespoke training for crew using watersports equipment.

Whichever training route you choose, it is always worth considering whether it is the right one for you, and value for money. To coin a phrase often reserved for tattoos: “Cheap isn’t necessarily good and good isn’t necessarily cheap!” 



**Traditional short-course training, which is still very effective, is definitely the norm, but some are plotting a different course using a blended-learning approach.**

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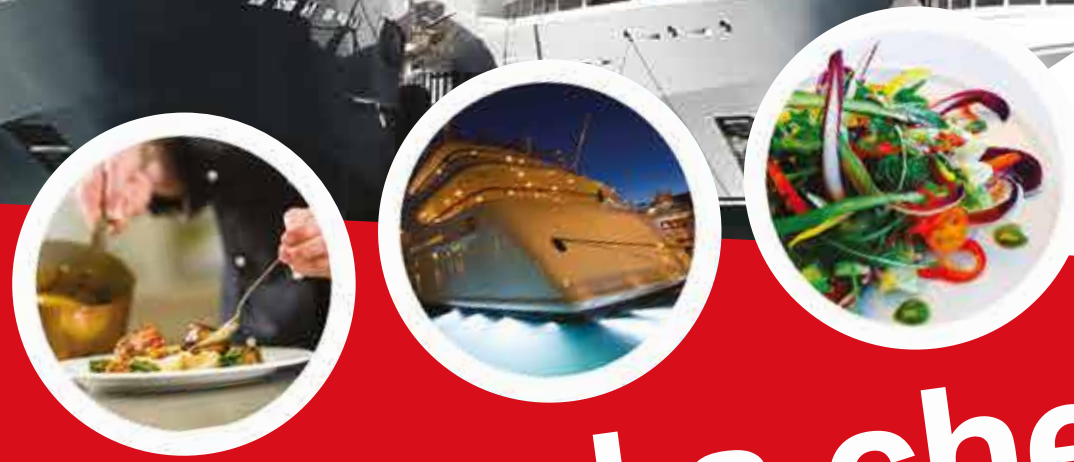
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INTERIOR

# Uniform nightmares



ALTHOUGH IT MAY SEEM SIMPLE, ORGANISING UNIFORM CAN BE AN EXTREMELY STRESSFUL TASK. WE SPEAK TO CREW À LA MODE'S LOTTIE LYNE ABOUT WHAT IT TAKES TO MANAGE UNIFORM ON BOARD SUCCESSFULLY AND HOW TO AVOID RUNNING INTO DISASTERS.

BY GEORGIA BOSCAWEN

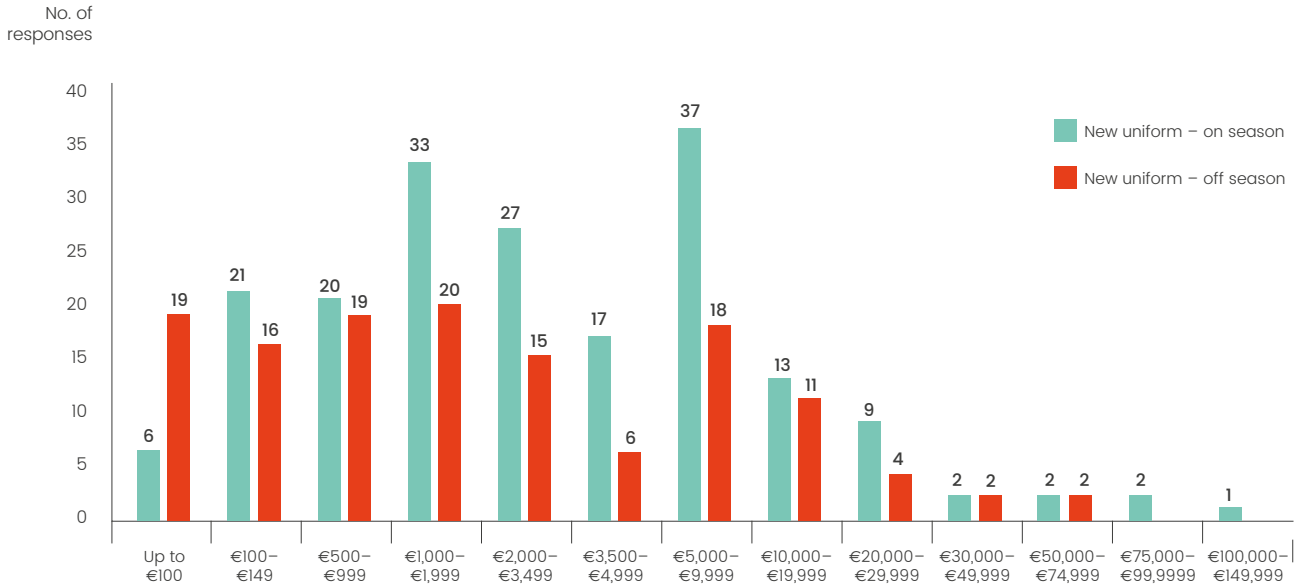
For those not involved in first-hand operations of a superyacht, uniform management may be pretty low on the list of priorities. However, in reality, crew uniform management is one of the biggest headaches on board. From sourcing new uniform for new crewmembers to excessive storage solutions, if not managed properly can create serious issues.

Even with the management of existing uniform, there are so many ways in which things can go wrong, especially on large yachts and vessels with a high turnover of crew. "The changing of crew has a big impact," says Crew à la Mode client director Lottie Lyne. "There are some yachts where a huge amount of money is wasted on reordering uniform due to the high level of crew turnover."

Retaining a loyal crew is important for a successfully run superyacht for numerous reasons, such as familiarity, a cooperative team and lower hiring and training costs. However, maintaining a successful inventory system for a superyacht with a high crew turnover is very difficult, so well thought-out processes are essential. "When boats are getting through a lot of staff, that's when the problems start setting in," explains Lyne. "Often, new crew don't know where everything has been ordered from or even where replacement uniform is stored."



## Budget for new uniforms



According to a survey of 644 crewmembers conducted by The Superyacht Intelligence Agency in 2015, 80 per cent said spare uniform for new crewmembers is stored on board. The trouble with this is that storage requirements are often such that there is simply no space on board the yacht. “We do offer off-the-boat inventory storage options,” says Lyne. “This means that the crew will have what they need on board, we have a warehouse with their inventory and the boat orders what they need when they need it. The trouble really comes when owners want uniform that is visually exciting and, as a result, constantly want a different look, but there is nowhere to put it all.” If there is an owner who likes to change the uniform on a regular basis, it’s both highly expensive to buy and a nightmare to store.

“The trouble really comes when owners want uniform that is visually exciting and, as a result, constantly want a different look, but there is nowhere to put it all.”

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**W:** www.syig.co

**A:** 840 NE 20th Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33304, USA

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**E:** Perry@Yachtlawyer.com

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**A:** P.O. Box 50160, 3601 Limassol, Cyprus

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**A:** HQ-7 Blvd D'Aguillon, 06600 Antibes, France

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**A:** Edificio Global (Oficina 10), Espigón Exterior (STP), Muelle Viejo, 07012, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

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Of course, there are ways to recycle unused uniform on board, such as wearing old uniform on your downtime or cutting it up and using it as cleaning rags but, as Lyne explains, "Often crew don't have the authority to throw anything out", and that includes recycling and repurposing old uniform. So while there are options to cope with an abundance of redundant uniform, until the owner gives the all-clear, crewmembers have no real choice other than to store it on board or in a shore-based unit.

Apart from the issue of storage, the biggest frustration concerns delivery delays and incorrect orders, according to The Superyacht Intelligence Agency survey. Here, 18.3 per cent of crew complained that often uniform is delayed because of being held up, customs, not completing orders within an emergency timeframe or taking too long dealing with customised colour pallets.

At Crew à la Mode, getting the lead time right is very important for both the crew and the company. While emergency orders are necessary in some cases, a short timeframe can incur high costs and potentially affect the



Image courtesy of Crew à la Mode



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design of the uniform too. "If there is an urgent project, the design element of the order will see the biggest compromise," says Lyne. "We do offer a short-term fix with a long-term strategy in time-sensitive projects, because if you don't have the time projects can end up costing twice as much without a comprehensive plan."

Having a time restriction to work within is not only a challenge in itself, but also will end up costing a huge amount of unnecessary money. For example, with an urgent total uniform change or perhaps a new uniform for a new build, the crew will need something to wear while the final order is being processed, whether this is a temporary cheap option or a quickly put-together uniform, while the final product is made in the conventional way. "It's like a puzzle," says Lyne. "We deliver items in the meantime and piece together the collection in the best way possible."


One thing that needs to be considered is that completing a uniform order is never a simple process, and this should be taken into consideration at the start of the planning stage. "Some stewardesses assume that what they want is very straightforward and think they can just put something in front of the owner and they'll simply order it all. Today's owners are becoming more interested in getting involved in the process, so will end up making a number of small changes, which will delay the order."

While some of the most significant frustrations from the crew perspective may be delivery delays and the ordering process, it's the small changes from the owner and crew, who assume that the process is going to be a simple one, that also appears to be a main cause for delay.

## Having a time restriction to work within is not only a challenge in itself, but will end up costing a huge amount of unnecessary money.

Then, after finally getting hold of the uniform, how does one ensure that the upkeep is kept under control? There is a considerable amount of money invested in uniform. In fact, new uniform is a big part of the monthly budget, according to the survey, so there is no room for mistakes when it comes to general upkeep. "This year, we're putting a huge focus on helping those on board maintain things correctly," explains Lyne. "We're working with boats to care for garments and ensuring that our knowledge is passed on to them so they can look after them properly." The important thing to remember is that the more difficult the general upkeep – such as having to deal with colourfast fabrics – the more of a nightmare it will be for the crew.

Uniform is an important part of a superyacht, encouraging a team mentality while also making all members look professional. From an owner's perspective, it is an important aspect of the yacht for their aesthetic pleasure. However, although owners want their crew to look professional in a style they like, Lyne explains, "At least 80 per cent of owners are sympathetic to what the crew want to wear, which will also financially work in their favour in the long run." It seems that while owners want their crew to look as smart as possible, they don't want to dress them in clothing they feel uncomfortable in.

From the crew's perspective, the management and procurement of uniform have always been tricky to get right, from ordering to disposal. But as Lyne explains, it's about keeping the project on track, having a full understanding of how to care for the garments and having an effective storage solution, even if that means a shore-based option. 

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# The Chief Stewardess CoC

BY ALICE WRING, G.U.E.S.T. STANDARDS

SUPERYACHT CHIEF STEWARDESS IVANA MATLOVICOVA TALKS ABOUT HER JOURNEY FROM BEING A NEW CREWMEMBER TO COMPLETING THE G.U.E.S.T. PROGRAM AND RECEIVING HER CHIEF STEWARDESS CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCY.

## What brought you into the yachting industry and did you have any prior experience in hospitality?

I lived for many years on the beautiful Caribbean Island of St Maarten where I was surrounded by yachts. While working in various restaurants, bars and spas, I made a lot of friends from the yachting sector and learned about the job and the lifestyle it offers before I joined my first yacht. I guess my life progressed naturally and I ended up doing what I love the most.

## How long did it take you to qualify for a chief stewardess position?

I have been working on yachts for close to 10 years now. I began my career in St Maarten with day trips on sailing boats and progressed to working on large motoryachts. My first serious position on board was as a masseuse and then as a housekeeping and service stewardess. From there I moved up to be a chief stewardess. It took me approximately four years to become a chief stewardess on a large motoryacht.

## Why did you choose to complete the G.U.E.S.T. Program and receive your CoC?

By working on various types of yachts I realised how different they all are in their standards and their operations. While one may be more competent in housekeeping, another may excel in service, safety or crew management. I felt I had some gaps in knowledge in a few fields and I wanted to improve on this, which is why I decided to complete the G.U.E.S.T. modules to achieve my G.U.E.S.T. Chief Stewardess CoC.

## Do you now feel more confident in training and supporting your interior team on board and are you using the Training Record Book as part of on-board mentoring?

Definitely. The G.U.E.S.T.-accredited training providers have high standards and have to meet demanding requirements to achieve their accreditation. So I am very confident in the training I received and therefore in completing all kinds of training on board, and I

enjoy it. Training is not only about sharing knowledge, but is also an important part of team-building and fun! I inform my interior team about the G.U.E.S.T. Program and encourage junior stewardesses to use the Training Record Book as a way to help them self-monitor their knowledge and skills, and help them develop their career. The deck crew already have such a system in place and this was very necessary for the interior crew.

## How do you hope to see your career evolve?

Every day I learn something new and I enjoy my time working on yachts, expanding everyone's knowledge and experiences on a daily basis. I like to share and pass on the skills I have gained and I want to get more involved in the motivational and emotional factors and dynamics between team members, especially important for multicultural crew.

## Has your G.U.E.S.T. qualification received recognition from the crew agents and captains you have approached?

Professional captains and crew agents do recognise the G.U.E.S.T. qualification. But many other crew (sometimes even senior deck crew) do not always know this training is available for interior crew.

## Are you actively encouraging your junior crew to follow G.U.E.S.T. training?

In my opinion, all yachts should follow the G.U.E.S.T. Program, and I believe yacht managers and senior crew should assist in encouraging this with the owners. It would be great if crew were offered a refund on their course fees once they have completed a year on board and allowed the time to complete the courses. I have previously completed a non-G.U.E.S.T.-accredited intermediate cocktail course with my interior team. It was cheaper but the teacher's training was not relevant to the yachting experience and they did not teach the necessary elements. **AW**

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# GUIDANCE FOR NEW INTERIOR CREW

BY BRIAN LUKE

**WHAT COURSES DO INTERIOR CREW REALLY NEED? BRIAN LUKE, PRESIDENT AT BLUEWATER MANAGEMENT AND CREW TRAINING, USA, OFFERS HIS ADVICE TO INTERIOR CREW WHO ARE NEW TO THE INDUSTRY.**

“What training do I need?” is the question we hear most often from new interior trainees. The answer is rarely a simple one. Welcome to the yachting industry, where trying to navigate the maze of courses and the regulatory structure can be daunting for the neophyte.

It is critical to understand what you are trying to accomplish during your training. First and foremost is safety: you need to understand how to work and live safely in your new environment. Second, you have to build a solid foundation for your future training: no training course can be designed to teach you everything – each is a building block to the next and it is up to you to build on this foundation. Finally, from a practical standpoint, you require the appropriate certificates to work on most yachts. You need to be safe

and you want to be highly employable.

Part of the secret of your success is to have qualifications that allow you to work on as many yachts as possible. The more qualifications you have, the higher the likelihood that you will be hired. If you

stewards to have some level of silver-service training and sometimes even a Powerboat Level 2 certificate. If you don’t have one, or both, without knowing you may have eliminated yourself from the possibility of being hired on that particular yacht.

**Statistics show that as a newbie with little to no experience, you will increase your odds of getting picked up by a yacht when you have invested in yourself.**

limit your qualifications, you will inadvertently limit the number of yachts available to you for work. For example, many yachts now require all

Where do you start? Your training centre should help you to get the right training and give you appropriate career advice for you to be safe



and marketable. Step one is to complete your STCW basic training (compulsory for any crew working on a commercial yacht). This includes PSSR (Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities), BST (Basic Survival Training), Basic Fire Fighting and First Aid/CPR. You should also take a security course straightaway. Many in our industry are pushing Security Awareness Training; in my opinion, and in the opinion of many captains who are looking to hire you, this is the wrong qualification for most crew. We work on yachts and, generally speaking, most will have a 'designated security duty' according to the vessel's security plan. Forget Security Awareness and take the yachting-appropriate Security Awareness with Designated Duties course. Security Awareness is less expensive and less time-consuming, but in the long run you will have to go back to take Security

Awareness with Designated Duties, unnecessarily spending more money and time.

Next, get your silver-service training. There is a wonderful programme called GUEST (Guidelines for Unified Excellence in Service Training), geared towards professional-level, seven-star service. As the front line for owners and guests, it is fundamental that interior crew have the level of in-depth knowledge, skill and confidence that is sufficient to offer the high-end service and hospitality required on board. As with the deck and engineering departments, interior crew can now benefit from a clearly defined training route, leading to an industry-recognised Certificate of Competence (CoC). In effect, GUEST mimics the Maritime and Coastguard Agency's (MCA) CoC system, providing superyacht interior crew with a professional ladder from which to climb.

Finally, I recommend Powerboat Level 2 (PB 2) and the ENG1 medical certificate. Yes, I am aware that these are not regulatory requirements, but remember that our goal is to increase your odds of getting hired. Today's superyacht crew need to be much more versatile than in the past, and it is now common for a stew to drive the tender. Statistics show that as a newbie with little to no experience, you will increase your odds of getting picked up by a yacht when you have invested in yourself. If you had an open position and two otherwise equally personable stewardesses, one with PB 2 and ENG1 and the other without, which one would you choose?

Some of you may say I am being self-serving, and that you don't need any of these courses to get hired. I know a few crew who didn't have their STCW when they were hired, but they are

the exception. I also know hundreds who took four or five entry-level courses at the outset and were hired very quickly. Instead of spending three to five months looking for a position, by setting themselves apart with the extra qualifications and willingness to invest in themselves and their careers, they went to work relatively quickly and earned good salaries for those three to five months – more than offsetting the additional time and expense of that extra training. They increased their odds of getting hired early on and it paid off well.

If you are serious about an interior position on a yacht, or even a lifetime of opportunity in the yachting industry, no matter how much or little experience you have, it's always important to build your CV. Most are willing to do only the minimum, so why not set yourself apart? [BL](#)

ABOUT BRIAN LUKE

**PRESIDENT**

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# Troublesome transitions



THE ROLE OF AN ENGINEER CHANGES DRASTICALLY WHEN MOVING FROM BEING A SOLE OPERATOR INTO A TEAM ENVIRONMENT. WE SPEAK TO THE TEAM AT VIKING RECRUITMENT ABOUT THE MAIN REQUIREMENTS NEEDED TO MAKE THE CHANGE AND HOW ENGINEERS KNOW IF THEY'LL MAKE THE CUT.

BY GEORGIA BOSCAWEN

The size of a vessel and type of equipment are the two things that determine how many engineers are required to make up the on-board team. But what are the main differences between working in a team and as a sole engineer, and how is technology transforming the role?

The first, and probably major, difference is the environment itself. Historically, engineers have spent the majority of their time down in the bowels of the boat, which naturally threatens to segregate them from the rest of the crew. But thanks to evolving technology, this doesn't have to be the case.

The way that technology has developed over the years means time spent in the control room or engine room can be significantly reduced. "There is so much automation these days that it's more of a case of an alarm going off which triggers them to spring into action and tend to the problem," says Paul Rutterford, general manager at Viking Recruitment.

"An engineer can now stand by for arrival with mooring ropes," adds James Scott, Viking Recruitment's yacht operations and travel manager. "Nowadays, engineers are very much mingling in to the point where he or she can sit in the bridge because the alarm for the engine room is up on the



bridge as well. So if something goes wrong, they can just pop down to the engine room.”

Therefore, the assumption that sole engineers are secluded on board is no longer the case as technology continues to develop and transform the role. As in most technologically focused fields, it would seem that engine rooms are getting smarter and the hands of engineers are perhaps getting cleaner as a result. So this begs the question: do engineers require all the hands-on knowledge and experience they would have needed five or 10 years ago?

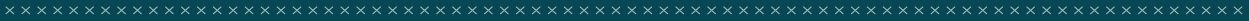
This isn't quite as straightforward for the engineer as it may seem. The introduction of each new technology means another learning exercise and further time demands in understanding how it works and how to use the new system properly. However, the raw 'get-your-hands-dirty' approach to engineering is something that doesn't seem to be quite as prevalent, which is why the nature of the role is evolving.

Interestingly, although there appears to be a broader field of expertise required for a sole engineer, the difference between working alone – effectively as your own boss – compared to working in a team is significant and it can be a challenging process. “A lot of people find it very difficult to change into a group if they are moving up from a smaller yacht to a larger one,” says Scott. “Firstly, their Certificate of Competency (CoC) will be a lot lower in value, so they'll be something like a third engineer, having come from being their own boss, so they may not feel so comfortable with that.”



*As engine rooms get more automated technology, engineers are less segregated as they're not confined to the engine room. (Image: Amels' Game Changer.)*

**While there may be more ticket requirements for engineers to work on board larger yachts, this doesn't in any way undermine the work of a sole engineer – in fact, it's just the opposite.**



Understandably, making the transition from a smaller yacht into a larger team can be hard because suddenly you're lower down the ranks. In general, the larger the yacht, the higher the ticket (CoC) requirements. "Depending on the size of the vessel and the size of the engines on board, the engineers have to have a greater licence as it increases," explains Rutterford. "When working in a team, you need to have different characteristics, so when recruiting you have to bear in mind where the engineer has come from and what their previous work experience is."

Larger engine rooms tend to be more like those of commercial ships, as Rutterford explains. "It does depend on the structure of the team. However, larger yachts, where there is a bigger team, are usually run like you would expect an engine room to be run in the merchant navy." As a result, when working in a larger team, it's more likely the majority will have come from a commercial background.

While there may be more ticket requirements for engineers to work on board larger yachts, this doesn't in any way undermine the work of a sole engineer – in fact, it's just the opposite. Sole engineers have to be much more multi-skilled. "It's a matter of IT, electronics, satellite, etc, because they're the only one," explains Scott. "Working in an engine room alone means that you have to have a very broad understanding of very diverse pieces of equipment."

The multifaceted demands of a sole engineering job actually require a very diverse skill set compared to that in larger teams, despite having a lower ticket. However, in a larger team, alongside the engineer's specialist skill, there is an additional essential requirement of good management skills in order to integrate well into the team, depending on the rank of the engineer.

It's clear there are a number of distinctive differences between the two and each

has its benefits and pitfalls. Working as part of a team doesn't necessarily appear to be a natural progression in the superyacht industry as the engineer's ticket value increases. As Scott rightly points out, "A lot of people actually find it very difficult to make the transition from a sole engineer into a team environment." Those who do work in a larger team often have commercial experience and are familiar with that team environment. Yet over the past five to 10 years, the nature of the engineering role in general has changed drastically, primarily due to progressive technology. Therefore, defining an engineer as 'sole' or 'team-based' is itself somewhat problematic as the requirements of each – just like the respective roles – are always evolving.

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# ENGINEERING TRAINING - STCW AND BEYOND

BY CAPTAIN TED MORLEY

AS REGULATIONS CHANGE, SO DOES TRAINING. TED MORLEY, CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER AT MARITIME PROFESSIONAL TRAINING, LOOKS AT THE NEW WAVE OF ENGINE-ROOM SIMULATOR TRAINING AND ITS BENEFITS FOR CREW.

The STCW Code has made sweeping changes to the maritime industry over the past few decades – many that are just now being fully realised. Deck officers have had those years of new regulations and training requirements, while the engineering requirements remained under development and were fine-tuned. Those are now in place and the change in training methodology has started.

The regulatory goal is to increase safety and reduce accidents; the owners' goal is to reduce costs and repairs; the engineers' goal is to be better at their jobs and be more valuable on board. Training is one of the few areas that actually helps achieve all of those goals and simulation training can be the most cost-effective way to do that.

For years, engineers received trade-school train-

ing, academy education and some specialised system training, but no formal simulation courses under the STCW. That also has changed. Now engineers benefit from state-of-the-art simulation technology that allows them to put into practice the theoretical and practical knowledge they have gained in their training. New regulations, new training equipment and combined training with the bridge teams are now creating some very effective training opportunities.

Simulation exercises will never replace the training that gets your hands dirty, but it allows engineers to train on the entire system, not just the components. This change will allow the engineering department, both officers and crew, to benefit from an increased depth of understanding and





## How can you safely and effectively complete those assessments on board without placing the vessel at undue risk? The simple answer is you need simulation.

knowledge of the various systems – and the integration of those systems – as well as how they interact and affect each other.

The current training system builds on the knowledge-based testing system of the past, expanding to include proficiency training and practical-skills assessments. While many of the assessments at the entry level can easily be accomplished in a workshop with the proper kit, it is very difficult to get the higher OICEW (Officer in Charge of an Engineering Watch) and Chief Engineer assessments completed. The complexity of the assessment and the multitude of systems that are involved are designed to recreate the on-board environment; systems integration and cascading failure points are all included.

With that in mind, how can you safely and effectively complete those assessments

on board without placing the vessel at undue risk? The simple answer is you need simulation. How that simulation works is where it gets complicated! In order to recreate the conditions found in modern engine rooms, those engine rooms need to be modelled in exact detail – every system, every valve, every piece of piping, every tank and every component. Modelling 10 to 20 different vessels gives enough of a cross-section example of the industry to capture a very accurate portrait of the systems in place.

These simulators are obviously not a desktop computer with a couple of monitors. Rather, they are very complex systems with a room full of computing power and fully integrated console workstations with all the equipment and hardware necessary to replicate not only the systems on board, but also the physical con-

ditions of a modern engine-control room. The complexity of the simulator facilities mirrors the complexity of the engine room, which is what helps to make it such an effective training tool.

The future of training is a blended approach of hands-on training, simulation training, CBT and distance e-learning, as well as classroom theory training. In this age of ever more complicated systems, training will get more complicated and it will be harder to keep pace. Engineers looking to upgrade their licence or expand their knowledge need to make sure they fully understand the new regulations and work with a school that can help them properly prioritise their training objectives. New regulations, new flag-state requirements, new systems, new technology and new propulsion methods are all adding to the complexity of this subject. <sup>TM</sup>

ABOUT TED MORLEY

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# Cooking up a storm



IN AUGUST 2014, CHANGES RATIFIED BY THE MLC WERE INTRODUCED THAT REQUIRED CERTAIN VESSELS TO HAVE A CERTIFIED SHIP'S COOK ON BOARD AT ALL TIMES. NOW RECOGNISED INDUSTRY-WIDE, THE CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCY IS BEING INCREASINGLY REQUESTED OF CANDIDATES. HOWEVER, THE MAJORITY OF YACHT CHEFS HAVE BEEN SLOW TO REACT, PRIMARILY DUE TO A LACK OF AWARENESS.

BY BRYONY MCCABE

The Ship's Cook Certificate (SCC) is a mandatory requirement for chefs working on commercially registered vessels operating more than 60 miles offshore and with 10 or more crew on board. The qualification replaces the previous Merchant Shipping (Certificate of Ships' Cooks) Regulations 1981. Chefs can qualify for the Certificate of Competency (CoC) from the age of 18 and, to be eligible, applicants are also required to have completed the STCW basic safety courses and hold an ENG1 or equivalent.

While many in the galley department have naturally opposed the requirements, claiming it is an additional waste of time and funds for yacht chefs who often have invested resources in other qualifications and experience, the regulations are in place and should be accepted. What does need to change, however, is the superyacht industry's understanding of the certificate: the value of it, what it is and what needs to be done to get it.

"As I have said to many chefs, in the next years ahead, those who have the Ship's Cook Certificate will have their choice of roles and will not be limited," asserts Justine Murphy, CEO of mymuybueno Private Chefs. "It would be a great shame for a chef to not be able to apply for his or her dream job because they did not have the one document required in hand. This



THE CREW REPORT  
ISSUE 83

GALLEY SECTION  
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While obtaining an SCC might seem like an arduous task to yacht chefs who have already invested heavily in their careers, those who do hold it are arguably in a much stronger position for the roles they are applying for.

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- desserts and puddings;
- bakery products.

While this may seem daunting to some, to an average yacht chef it is not technically difficult, as one yachting candidate at Sea Chef Services sums up, "I feel like I have been tested, but I never felt that what was being asked was beyond reasonable expectations of a chef or the MCA Ship's Cook criteria," she recalls. "The written exam is thorough and tests depth of knowledge. Both practical assessments were enjoyable and I particularly appreciated how hard both instructors worked to keep you at ease under exam conditions."

At the time of writing, the MCA lists six locations in the UK and France that can administer the Assessment in Marine Cookery: South Tyneside College, the City of Glasgow College, Dumfries and Galloway College, Entier Limited, Bluewater Antibes and Tante Marie Culinary Academy. Many of these locations will offer additional help for candidates for certain theory and practical aspects of the assessment. For example, Tante Marie's full four-day prep and assessment, including one day of Food Safety Level 2, costs £1,000.

At Tante Marie, preparation and assessment is run over four to five days, with the flexibility to omit elements where accredited prior learning applies, but candidates are encouraged to recognise that it is an assessment of skills and not a teaching course. Tante Marie offers further help through a virtual learning environment that allows access to useful tutorials. Candidates are advised to carefully read the learning outcomes and







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# MEAT TRENDS

BY COLIN CLARK

THE TASTE FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF MEAT IS ALWAYS TRENDING ON THE FOOD SCENE. HERE, COLIN CLARK, HEAD OF PROVISIONING AT EVOLUTION YACHT AGENTS, LOOKS AT WHAT CHEFS SHOULD LOOK TO HAVE ON BOARD.

As with most other commodities, meat is subject to fashions and trends. We can take as one example, from a few years ago, the obsession with Wagyu beef and dry-ageing, both of which I can't help but feel were taken to extremes.

The higher-grade Japanese breeds that produce Wagyu beef are prized for their uber-marbling of unsaturated fat. However, this can often mask the true flavour, resulting in a lump of fat with some beef marbling. While a small amount of marbling can be desirable, it is by no means the holy grail of beef; you can have an excellent piece with no marbling. Likewise, the ageing process has been taken to ridiculous extremes. It's recommended that beef carcasses hang under normal refrigeration for a good couple of weeks and under controlled humidity for about 30 days.

The three or four months (or more) that some producers currently use overpower the true taste of beef.

Now the current trend is cow beef, with high-profile publications on both sides of the Atlantic claiming that the best steaks in the world are coming from Spanish cows – and I mean cows, not heifers or steers. Why would this be, when cow beef has been sneered at for years as good enough only for 'manufacturing'? Well, the truth of the matter is that they are producing some really excellent beef (it can be seen on the menus of most of the Michelin-starred restaurants). The answer is quite simple. Flavour in beef comes from two main things: diet and age. Most of these cows available in the market are ex-dairy cattle that have reached the end of their milk-producing years. So they're



## Market prices increasingly drive the way that livestock are raised and processed, with a focus on bigger, faster and cheaper methods that result in more profit but less quality.

fattened up and put to market. We are talking about animals of between five and nine years old that have been well fed (good feeding equates to good milk production) and have lived long enough to put real oomph into their meat ('oomph' loosely translating as collagen).

In some ways, it seems that part of the problem is that few people have tasted really good beef. Producing great beef is both simple and extremely complicated. Bovines are herbivores and thrive best on a variety of grasses and leafage. Left alone, the cattle know which grass or plant is at its optimum and this comes through in the meat's flavour. Unfortunately, in the majority of cases, it's not the stockmen and conscientious farmers who control production. Market prices increasingly drive the way that livestock are raised and processed, with a focus on bigger, faster and cheaper methods that result in more profit but less quality.

Fortunately, there are still people who care enough about their product and

animals to provide top-class beef, lamb, pork and poultry. You have to search far and wide, but that's part of my job, that's why I cultivate very good relationships with small producers, mainly in the UK, who use heritage breeds such as English Longhorn cattle and Herdwick sheep to produce excellent meat.

It's not all doom and gloom, though, as some of the new tendencies are very positive. Rosé veal is a good example. Dairy cows must calve once a year to maintain milk production. Usually, they're mated to a beef bull such as an Aberdeen Angus, Hereford or Galloway. The resulting calves are raised to two or three years and form a large part of the beef we eat. A small percentage is mated with dairy bulls and the female calves are raised to produce milk. Male calves are usually killed at birth, but many British producers are now raising male dairy calves for the veal market under some very stringent welfare guidelines, producing an excellent and very ethical product. [CC](#)

ABOUT COLIN CLARK

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CAREERS



# Virtually there



VIRTUAL REALITY (VR) IS RECEIVING PLENTY OF COVERAGE AS CONSUMER-GRADE VR HEADSETS ARE BECOMING MORE ACCESSIBLE IN THE MASS MARKET. BUT AS WELL AS LEISURE AND GAMING POSSIBILITIES, COULD VR PROVE TO BE A NATURAL EVOLUTION OF THE CLASSROOM FOR SUPERYACHT CREWS?

BY TIM THOMAS

It has long been vaunted as the future for our technologically advancing world and now virtual reality (VR) is finally upon us. With the introduction of high-end gear such as Occulus Rift and HTC Vive, and the proliferation of more consumer-grade headsets designed to deliver VR via your smartphone, it seems everyone is keen to get in on the action. Moreover, VR is increasingly featured in films that, more often than not, suggest a dystopian future where the virtual world is an escape from reality rather than an adjunct to it. One only has to think of *The Matrix* in 1999 or the upcoming Ready Player One to see two viewpoints of what VR might mean for the future of humanity.

But, of course, the reality is somewhat different from these fictionalised interpretations, and VR might indeed be strongest not in total escapism, but rather in training. It is particularly pertinent for those involved in safety and security or in remote locations where physical classroom attendance is difficult. Cue the development of VR training and specifically for the maritime and superyacht industries.



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**“The most interesting thing about VR is that you can really build up the pressure and get close to the emotional pressure that someone might experience in a real situation.”**

Gordon Meadow is a former yacht crewmember who now works as an associate professor at Southampton Solent University on the Warsash campus – home of the maritime academy. “My areas of interest are pedagogy [the method and practice of teaching] and I branch out into more general future thinking,” says Meadow. “A lot of what I do is based around autonomous ships and that sort of area, and trying to understand how we should train seafarers of the future.”

Meadow started working with VR around three years ago and among several projects for different partners found success with the International Association of Maritime Universities (IAMU). That has now developed into an extended project that is underway as you read this. “We have a year-long project – ‘Redefining Seafaring Pedagogy – Impacts of VR on Seafarer Training’ – where we’re trying to develop a toolkit to understand how maritime educators will train people using VR in the future,” Meadow continues. “So, basically, the project is aiming to establish a best-practice benchmark to help understand the uses of

VR in maritime education and also to help educators be able to develop that capability. We call it ‘thinking inside the box’ because it’s really about not limiting your vision of what’s possible. And I think we’ve only just hit the tip of the iceberg.”

Moving towards computer-based simulations in the classroom is not, in itself, new, but what VR brings is not only a completely different level of total immersion, but also the possibility to train remotely, in a custom environment or to suit the timetable of the student.

“VR is really powerful in that you can place people into an entirely different world so you can train for situations you might not encounter otherwise,” says Thijs de Vries, a gamification expert and founder of VR specialist company Warp Industries. “It’s hard to train for a fire, for example, if there’s no fire; with VR you can really create and see that fire. VR is really interesting in that you can put people into what is essentially a safe environment where they can really learn through experimentation and through failure, and you can put them there in a way that no other media can create.”

The key, says de Vries, is that rather than learning through dictation and testing – the traditional model of teaching – VR immersion encourages you to explore and learn through experience. “The most interesting thing about VR is that you can really build up the pressure and get close to the emotional pressure that someone might experience in a real situation.” It’s not just about the emotional response to safety-critical incidents – this pressure and the VR scenarios can also include leadership training or even how to interact with the owner and guests in different simulated situations on board.

“Alongside gaming, which is going to be huge, I think VR training is the future for VR,” says Ingmar Vroege, founder of Bricks & Goggles. The company, launched with the intention of converting 3D renders of new architectural products, homes and (more recently) superyachts into a virtual environment that an owner or design team can explore at concept stage, adds another twist to the VR possibilities. The prospects of developing and using those virtual yacht models are an obvious tie-in to training and



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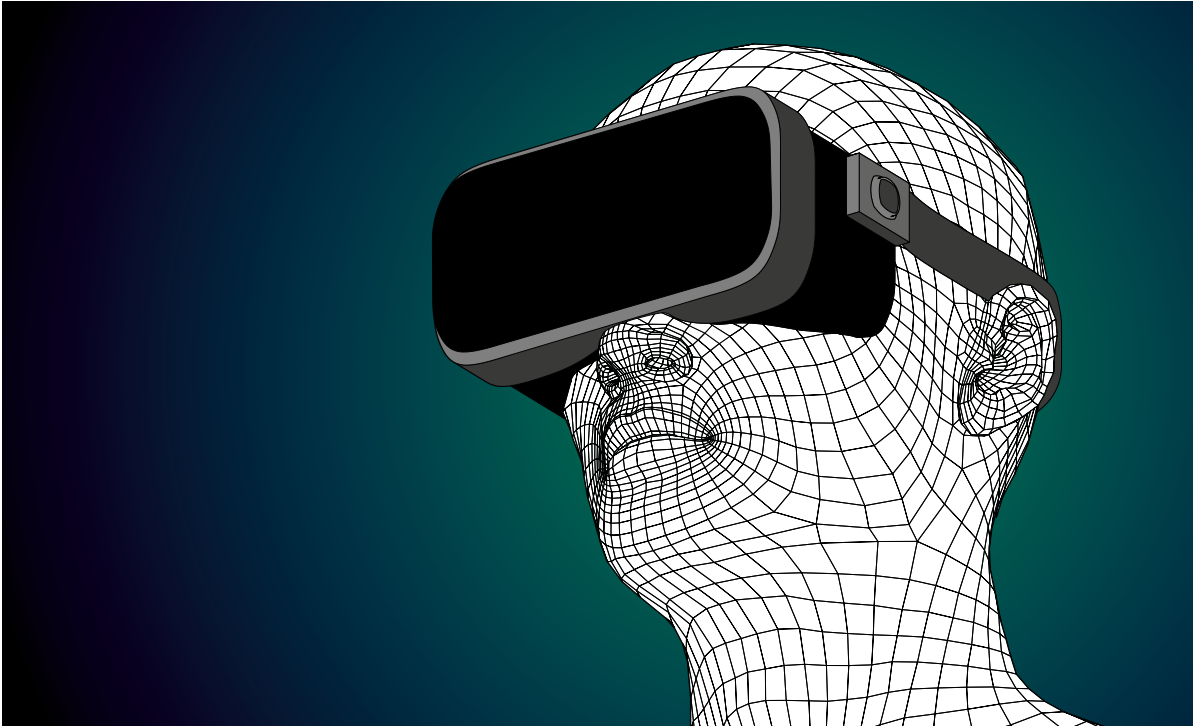
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*There is the possibility of using VR to run training courses on board the superyachts themselves.*

**“We call it ‘thinking inside the box’ because it’s really about not limiting your vision of what’s possible. And I think we’ve only just hit the tip of the iceberg.”**

yacht familiarisation. “I think that’s where we’re going,” says Vroege. “It’s pretty cool that a yacht could have a virtual twin where you can use or create your training aspects, and in that sense a virtual model has a really long lifespan.”

For Meadow, the key to developing VR training is to make it accessible and affordable. “We’re going at it from a more sustainable approach,” he explains. “One of the central points of our IAMU project is to bring it in in an affordable way, so we’re developing an app which will be a platform for virtual lessons and we’ve also developed the app to run on smartphones to be used with a cheap cardboard headset. We’re trying to look at it from a

different approach in terms of bringing it to the masses rather than making it more selective.”

This, perhaps, might just define what sort of VR training we may see in our industry and when, although opinion appears to be divided over what is really achievable with today’s technology. “To be honest, I think VR is going very slowly, although the media and the press say otherwise,” says Vroege. “I think mobile VR – where you put your smartphone in a headset – isn’t where it should be and although it’s a nice experience it isn’t really adding any value. It’s a gimmick and I think people see it as such – there’s nothing really special about mobile VR.”



Vroege says the magic really lies in 'real' VR using the Oculus Rift or HTC Vive connected to a powerful computer, where photorealistic renders of the world are made possible by the type of hardware that can't be squeezed into a phone handset.

"There are [currently] limitations with the technology and the tech capability of the people trying to interface with it and also the accessibility just purely from the cost of the device," Meadow admits. "Moreover, you could face a problem of the novelty wearing off – students very quickly get used to things, and we see that already with the likes of our £200,000 PC-based simulators! You've got to be creative to keep them engaged with the content, and it's also about understanding how to use the virtual space well."

However, VR might develop as a training tool, and whatever the debate over technologies, the future is perhaps closer than you might think. "We're currently doing our first study," says Meadow. "In September, I'm going to China where we are looking to understand the user experience with some maritime students there. So towards the end of the year we'll be using VR

## "Imagine teaching in a virtual space where you have two or three superyacht crews all on board their superyachts in their own virtual room."

in a classroom. In fact, St John's University in Canada, Durban University of Technology and the Navigation Institute of Jimei in China, as well as Warsash, will be using it in whatever areas we've developed." And he adds, "We're genuinely trying to push the boundaries of what's possible. Certainly, by September 2018, it will be used in as many classrooms as I can get it in at Warsash and as many maritime colleges as I can."

So what are the possibilities after that? "The next stage will be building a collaborative platform that, for example, would enable us to run a class or a session for the likes of a superyacht on board the superyacht itself," says Meadow. "We need to

understand it a bit more before we can do that, but to some extent there's no limit to the possibilities. Imagine teaching in a virtual space where you have two or three superyacht crews all on board their superyachts in their own virtual room. Each crewmember has an avatar, and from each yacht's virtual room you all jump into a different reality or scenario and then jump back into your yacht's virtual room again afterwards. It really takes a little bit of getting your head around."

Perhaps the science fiction – in a less dystopian fashion at least – is not so wide of the mark after all. **IT**

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# Crew contracts

WHAT SHOULD YOU ENSURE IS AGREED BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR CAPTAIN WHEN WORKING ON A YACHT THAT DOESN'T REQUIRE CREW TO HAVE EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS? THE PROFESSIONAL YACHTING ASSOCIATION (PYA) TELLS YOU WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR.

BY CAREY SECRETT, PYA

It's important for crew working on 'pleasure vessels' (that is yachts that do not charter and are not covered by the MLC) to have written evidence showing the terms and conditions that have been agreed between the crewmember and the employer, even if this is not legally required by the flag state.

Ideally, again even if not required by flag, the written evidence should be in the form of a Crew Agreement (an agreement made with the whole crew) or a contract of employment (which is an agreement made with each individual crewmember). But even an exchange of emails showing what was agreed can be useful if there is a dispute.

The UK and some other flag states have specific requirements for documenting the employment of seafarers on pleasure vessels. The UK (see MGN 474 (M)) requires that a 'Crew Agreement', in an approved form, be opened if more than four crew are paid and the vessel makes voyages other than 'coastal voyages'.

Time and time again, when members come to the PYA for help in resolving disputes with their employer, we find there is nothing in writing to show what was agreed. A recent example received from a PYA member illustrates the problem: "This boat and others in my past have had inadequate or no contract at all; it's hard to

challenge but I have and will continue to. This experience helps to explain why it's needed; everyone on [the yacht] thought they had a good relationship with the owner; little did they know ..."

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Whether you will be working on a commercial yacht or a pleasure vessel, we strongly recommend you reach an agreement with the captain on all of the terms and conditions of your employment before you join the yacht. As these discussions are likely to take place during a period of some stress, and the captain may be pressing you to sign on quickly, it is sensible to have a checklist to ensure you don't miss anything (see below).

Some employment contracts (not MLC Seafarer Employment Agreements) may include a clause that allows the employer to set off any accrued leave against the notice period when you leave. Watch out for this because it can come as a nasty surprise.

Having reached an agreement, it's wise to make a record of what has been agreed. The simplest way to do this is to ask the captain to send you an email containing the job offer and stating the agreed terms and conditions. Many captains do this anyway as part of their crew recruitment procedure. If you are in any doubt over a contract (or lack of), as a PYA member you can seek advice from our team.

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## CHECKLIST

- Position and duties on board
- Duration of employment (indefinite or for a fixed period)
- Salary (amount and currency) and any bonuses, such as a 13th month
- How the salary is paid
- Your social-security status and whether payment will be made on your behalf
- Entitlement to paid holidays and to free travel for holiday purposes
- Duration of trial period and notice to be given during trial period
- Notice to be given after trial period
- Date and place of joining and who pays for your travel to get there
- Repatriation destination and who pays for your travel to return there from the yacht
- Normal working hours and whether Saturday work is required
- Handling of tips
- Time off for outside training, and whether the time and training will be paid
- Medical cover provided, and whether it covers you when not working or has any restrictions
- Rules about smoking on board
- Rules about drinking on board

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# HEALTH INSURANCE IN THE US: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

BY MARK BONONI

AS THE US YACHTING SEASON BEGINS, MARK BONONI, DIRECTOR, LUXURY YACHT DIVISION AT MHG INSURANCE BROKERS, LOOKS AT WHAT MEDICAL INSURANCE CREW NEED, WHETHER YOU'RE A US CITIZEN OR JUST VISITING ON A CHARTER.

In many countries, you can receive medical treatment at little or no additional cost to you because the country has a socialised medical system that takes care of its citizens. But because you may not be at home when you get sick or injured, you need to ensure you have coverage wherever you are in the world.

In the US, we do not have a socialised medical system – yet. Even though the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, precludes insurers from excluding people due to medical history, there continues to be strict rules regarding when you can buy insurance and the options available to you. The reality is that no matter what your nationality, you need to be aware of what coverage you have (or do not have) and how to utilise it before you need it.

Can you imagine what would happen after you were admitted to hospital in

the US if you had a medical situation not covered by your insurance? To minimise the chances of the worst happening, let's break down some differences between insurance in the US and international plans, as well as discussing how best to protect yourself.

For starters, you need to make sure your insurance covers you adequately, no matter where you are in the world, but especially in the United States. Whether you live in the US full time or visit only part of the year, you are inviting a potential financial disaster if you are without health insurance. Why? The average annual global health-care cost per person is \$3,620. In the US, the average annual cost is more than \$9,000, well over twice the average of other developed countries. In the US, medical costs increase very quickly, particularly in the event of hospitalisation. There are many reasons





the cost of care is so high in the US, one being that the medical system is extremely complicated and often inefficient. Make sure your insurance provides you with adequate cover when you are in the US so you don't end up facing those high costs on your own.

Interestingly, though, most US policies either do not cover someone travelling outside the US or they have extremely limited coverage outside the US. If you are thinking about having only a US health insurance plan as a yacht crewmember, you may have insufficient cover and should consider supplementing it with an international crew insurance plan.

There are many differences between a US plan and an international plan. For example, there will be exclusions and limitations

to an international crew-insurance plan that you would not find in a traditional US plan, such as those involving pre-existing conditions. And while most crew international health insurance plans do not have geographical restrictions, some can be quite cumbersome. In particular, you may not be covered in your home country, or your policy may exclude coverage in the US or other countries. This is OK if you already have a plan that covers you in those areas. If you don't, keep in mind you cannot get insurance just because you are sick or injured. Also, there are other restrictions on international plans, such as certain sporting activities that may not be covered.

So what's the message here? Just because you have insurance doesn't always

mean you are insured. Please make yourself aware of any plan features and restrictions that your plan may have and follow these tips to avoid finding out the hard way:

1. Take advice from your crew insurance broker;
2. Make sure you have a copy of your policy and take a moment to read it carefully;
3. Call your insurance company.

Your health insurance is the best line of defence between you and a potential financial disaster caused by a medical condition. You need to be aware of the nuances of different types of health insurance plans and what each of them may or may not cover (and where) from the very beginning. Solid insurance coverage can give you peace of mind, knowing that when the time comes to use it, all you need to do is focus on your recovery. **MB**

**Just because you have insurance doesn't always mean you are insured.**

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